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ABSTRACT

This guide explains how and why the videotapes, "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me" and "What Soviet Children Are Saying about Nuclear Weapons," were made and provides background information and activities that will aid in using the tapes. Chapters I and III contain interviews with producers of the videotapes. Topics are how children were selected and prepared for the taping, how questions were posed, how editing was done, and, in the case of the Soviet children, how the investigators gained access to the children and what, if any, restrictions were imposed. Chapters II and IV are transcripts of the video tapes. Chapter V provides activities that allow young people and adults to join in the on-going study about how children everywhere are affected by living in the nuclear age. Some activities encourage local research about the attitudes of children; others help raise the question of what role schools and families might play in educating about nuclear weapons and understanding other cultures. Chapter VI provides the names and addresses of four people who have used the videotapes and have agreed to share their experience with others. (IS)

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Soviet and American Voices

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LISTENING TO CHILDREN:
SOVIET AND AMERICAN VOICES

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LISTENING TO CHILDREN:
SOVIET AND AMERICAN VOICES

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in collaboration with Roberta Snow

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INTRODUCTION

The two videotapes, "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me," produced in 1982 by Dr. Eric Chivian and Roberta Snow, and "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons," produced in 1983 by Dr. Chivian, document what some children in the United States and the Soviet Union are saying about the threat of nuclear war. Because the tapes show children sharing their feelings, they have proved valuable in stimulating discussion with a variety of adult and adolescent audiences.

The purpose of this guide is to explain why and how the tapes were made and to provide background information and activities that will aid in using the tapes. Experience has shown that audiences often wish to understand better how children were selected and prepared for the taping, how questions were posed, how editing was done, and in the case of the Soviet children, how the investigators gained access to the children and what, if any restrictions were imposed. Transcripts of the tapes and interviews with the producers are provided to answer these questions.

The activities section was designed to allow adults and young people to join in the on-going study about how children around the world are affected by living in the nuclear age and how adults might respond. Some activities encourage local research for people to find out for themselves how children in their area think and feel about nuclear weapons. Other activities help to raise in communities the question of what role schools and families might play in educating about nuclear weapons and in understanding other cultures.

These two videotapes challenge us to listen carefully to these children, to find ways of listening to other children, and to examine our own feelings and thoughts about the children's concerns and about issues related to the arms race.

The videotapes are available for rental or purchase through:

Intersection Associates
56 Chestnut Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-5200

Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1764

A 16 mm film of "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons" is available through:

Educational Film and Video Project
1725 Seabright Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(408) 427-2627

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE VIDEOTAPE

"THERE'S A NUCLEAR WAR GOING ON INSIDE ME"

An Interview with Roberta Snow and Dr. Eric Chivian by Andra Rose

Andra Rose: What is the videotape about?

Roberta Snow: This tape shows excerpts from five different classes, first through ninth grades, discussing nuclear weapons with psychiatrist Eric Chivian and educator Roberta Snow.

AR: What were the students' responses?

Eric Chivian: Most of the students knew something about nuclear weapons, most of them thought about it and many of them felt very worried about the possibility of a nuclear war. Depending on their age, many of the young people we interviewed expressed fear, despair and anger. Some believed the world would blow up before they reached the age of thirty.

AR: And they just offered this information?

RS: Right. As soon as one person started to speak, it let out a flow in each class. There was an enormous relief, and almost no resistance to talking about it.

EC: There's a problem in showing the videotape to someone cold. It's hard to believe. People think that these were children of anti-nuclear activists who were told what to say. They can't believe that these were spontaneous comments from children.

AR: Are the classes shown in this tape the only ones that you've interviewed?

RS: No, I've been doing untaped discussions like this for three years in classrooms, talking with young people. Basically the tape replicates what I've found in schools across the country. This is how young people are thinking about nuclear weapons, especially in their first reaction to talking about it. I've been in over 60 classrooms over the past three years. For me this started as a letter writing project, where the students were writing autobiographical letters to the Soviet Union. I thought they would just talk about their hopes for the future. What I found was that they talked about their fear and panic about nuclear weapons. In all the classrooms I went into, I found a similar kind of impulse to talk about these weapons. In the very beginning, I was shocked and I didn't know anything about nuclear weapons. So Dr. Chivian and I joined together to look at, as an educator and a psychiatrist, what it is we need to say to children about this issue.

AR: What interested you in doing this work, Dr. Chivian?

EC: Well, probably the initial impetus came from hearing my own son talking about his fears about not growing up. He was ten years old at the time, and I began to wonder whether he was somewhat unique in the fact that he was the child of someone who was working pretty actively in this area, or whether many other young people his age and younger were thinking and feeling similar things. To look into that, we set up a project to go into his classroom and found that he was not alone.

AR: What questions did you ask?

RS: Basically, we asked five questions: Where have you heard the word "nuclear"? What do you know about it? How does it make you think, feel? And how does it affect your future? What questions do you have?

EC: And then in a corollary way, we also asked whether they talked with anyone about these thoughts and feelings, to their parents, teachers, friends, and what they thought could be done about this problem. That was also an important thing to ask.

AR: Did you prod them at all?

RS: We tried to avoid that by asking questions that were non-directive, that simply allowed the young people to elaborate on their initial responses to our questions. Our intention was to inquire without giving information. The interview was designed to be a time for students to talk, to break a silence with them.

EC: It's important to conduct these interviews in a way that respects what the young people experience themselves, and not to interfere but to record their responses as faithfully as we can. Now, the hardest thing in doing these kinds of interviews is not to jump in and correct misinformation, and there's a lot of it. Students say things like, one nuclear weapon can blow up the whole world, or, all life will be wiped out with one nuclear bomb. I think it's important not to jump in and say, "No, that's not correct, one nuclear weapon will be very destructive, but it won't wipe out the whole world." It's important to say that at some point, but not as the students are sharing their thoughts and concerns.

AR: How were you introduced to the classes?

RS: In the third through ninth grade classes, we were introduced as adults who were interested in hearing what young people felt and thought about nuclear weapons. In the first grade class, we didn't mention the word nuclear in front of them until they mentioned it. We just said that we were people who were interested in what they thought.

EC: We were very worried about introducing the subject to people who didn't know anything about it, particularly in the younger grades. That did not turn out to be a problem. As soon as the word nuclear was mentioned, the students knew a lot more than we gave them credit for.

AR: How did you get the young people to be so serious?

RS: When you take young people seriously, they take themselves seriously. I think what made the interviews work was the attention paid to them. For a classroom of 20 to 25 students to have three adults sitting there listening to what they're saying is a very powerful statement that we care about what they think, about their future. That is a very serious statement to them, and they act in accordance with that.

AR: Did you get permission from the parents?

RS: All students had permission to be taped and for their tape to be used for educational purposes.

AR: What were the parents' reactions?

RS: It ranged from relief that somebody was talking about it, to just general acceptance that it was fine for the school to do it. But there wasn't one child not allowed to be a part of the taping in all five classes. After viewing the tape of their children's class, many parents were shocked. They had no idea that their children knew about nuclear weapons.

AR: Were teachers reluctant to have their classes taped?

RS: Not at all. The teachers felt really curious whether the students would know anything. Many teachers felt that their students wouldn't know. Teachers and parents were generally motivated by the tape to learn more about the issues.

AR: Do you think the adult community response was so welcoming because these issues were done in the Boston area? Are the young people in this area more aware of the issue?

RS: In our experience with Educators for Social Responsibility and the Day of Dialogue program in schools across the country, parents actively supported the school in looking carefully and thoughtfully at what nuclear education can be. Parents helped their children talk about it. That's been the overwhelming community response in all places. There have been a very small number of communities that have objected to opening up a discussion about nuclear education.

EC: About the students, we are a culture where young people are inundated with information about war and nuclear weapons, all over the country, not just in Boston. They hear it on the news all the time, they know what it means, and it affects them.

AR: What were your considerations in choosing the classrooms?

RS: We chose classes that had no previous lessons or programs about nuclear weapons. We wanted to make sure that, if students had learned about it, it would not have been through the school. And we chose classes that we knew would provide a good support system in case additional work needed to be done with the group. Of the five teachers, only one of them had been active in the arms race issue, but they were all open to their students' expressing a full range of feelings and thoughts about world issues.

AR: Is there a political ideology you want to impress on students in the classrooms where you interview?

RS: When I work with students, I am careful not to teach any one political stand. I really do try to help them explore all of the perspectives equally, to not look for simple answers, to understand the complexity of the issue, so that they can make informed decisions.

AR: How do you know the students didn't just say what you wanted to hear?

EC: Well, that's a potential problem in any study. But even if one said that 50% of the responses have to be thrown out, it would still be a strong statement about how deeply some young people are affected by the threat of nuclear war.

AR: In your opinion, what percent of the students that you've interviewed are deeply affected by the nuclear threat?

EC: It depends on the class. We haven't done exact counts of this, but certainly most of their hands go up when we ask who has heard about nuclear weapons. So I would say 70 or 80 percent of young people above the age of ten know a fair amount about nuclear weapons, and about 75 percent of those young people are affected by it. We're talking about fifty percent. In the younger classes, fewer of them knew about it. I would say about a third of the first graders knew about nuclear weapons. And of the third, I would say about half to three-quarters were affected in significant ways.

AR: Would you talk about how the young people of various ages spoke about nuclear weapons?

EC: The first graders don't really have a very clear idea about what nuclear weapons do. Every war is a nuclear war to them, it's very immediate. For them, it's quite local, it's confined to their family, they talk about their streets being blockaded and bombed. There's not a sense of this being global in its effect. Surprisingly, with the first grade we saw, there was a sense of what they could do about it, some demand for action. That was very interesting, because the third grade we saw had very little sense of what could be done.

They felt much more despairing. I think in both cases, the young people feel pretty helpless. When they're that small, they don't feel like they have much of an effect on anything. We interviewed the third graders during the Falklands war, and again, there was some confusion about war in general and nuclear war in particular. They were quite upset, a lot of them talked about not growing up, which surprised us, because we're talking about eight-year-olds. And there was a lot of despair in the room, a lot of sadness, hardly any anger. There wasn't much in the way of denial or rationalization of what they were experiencing. The dominant mood was despair. The third graders were very involved with fears of survival, fears that they would be abandoned, that their parents would be dead, their friends would be dead, they wouldn't know what to do. They did seem to have a greater sense of global effects. Fifth graders had more defenses, they were angrier, more interested in action, had much more information. They knew a lot more about nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons effects. They also had a real global sense of these effects. There was also a fair amount of despair about not growing up, but more anger that adults had really screwed things up.

Q: Would you describe what you call despair?

EC: Despair is a combination of, usually, extreme sadness and hopelessness. That is, a state where it is believed that the sadness will never go away. The seventh graders were angrier still, and more cynical, really more distrustful of adults. They were a lot more cynical about civil defense, about the government and adults not protecting them, about adults not really knowing what they are doing. They're getting old enough to see themselves as adults and identify with adults and yet feel unprotected by them. There was some despair of not making it, and of the bomb hitting at any moment. The ninth grade was a very interesting group, a very mixed class. There was a sense of not wanting to survive if there were a nuclear war. The ninth graders also talked about how everything would be gone, there would be nothing to live for, nothing to look forward to. They felt a lot of anger in that class. And again, a lot of personal comments about being drafted, about having babies, about what nuclear war would do to babies, and about being unprotected and at the mercy of crazy adults. They also had more of an understanding of how totally destructive these weapons would be.

AR: Did you get feedback from the teachers about what the students' moods were after the interviews?

RS: When we showed the video to the students, we found that some of them had felt relieved just to find out that adults know about nuclear weapons. The younger children think that people don't even know about it, so they found out that there are adults who know and are working actively on it. That's been a huge relief, and it opened a possibility for them to talk more to adults.

EC: See, we ended each interview session by saying that we don't think there's going to be a nuclear war because so many people are involved in trying to work to stop it. We say that we see the students as being actively working to stop it too, just by making this videotape, they are participating in that. So all that's very upbeat. Most of these students, I'm sure, have never spoken of these things before, so this is a way of releasing what they're feeling and realizing that other young people feel similar things. I think the whole experience has been positive in all the classes we've gone into. The young people have not felt more scared, as one might expect, but have felt relieved.

AR: What audiences have viewed the tape so far?

RS: It's been shown in a variety of settings, in schools, churches, medical groups, social work groups, people trying to understand the psychological effect of nuclear weapons on young people even if the weapons are never used. Parts of the tape have been on American and Soviet T.V.

AR: What are your goals in doing these interviews?

RS: I am interested in having the tape used for adult education. As an educator, I'm trying to help other adults to understand that young people really are thinking about this issue and that some are terrified and that we do need to address the issue with them. We may not have any answers about the best ways to go about it, but we certainly do need to give young people a chance to at least talk to us about it.

AR: Should students see this tape?

RS: Some teachers have found it effective to show to high school students, to show them the range of feelings that young people have about the issue. I think that students under eighth grade really just need time to talk and think and ask questions; they don't need a formal program on the destruction that nuclear weapons could cause. It seems like for younger people, it's more important that we be active ourselves so that we can look at our children and say, "I'm doing everything I can to prevent nuclear war." We're hoping that people will use the video to look at how to support young people without giving them information they don't need. You can listen to them and not enlist them in your adult campaign, but listen to where they are. From this information, we can develop age-appropriate programs for the schools.

EC: I think for older students, nuclear education should be a part of the school curriculum and parents should learn as much as they can about it. I think it is appropriate to talk in more detail about the real effects of nuclear weapons and why it is so important for people to work to stop their use. And, you know, the students will be scared or upset as they learn, but they are anyway. I think that's our point; we're not going to be introducing this topic, it's already there.

RS: I hope our tape will be a guide for others to do this kind of interview process in schools that are different than the ones we've been in. In more inner-city schools, and in other parts of the country, where the stereotype is that these students are not concerned about nuclear weapons. We need to see if that is true.

AR: What advice would you give to people who want to use this approach?

RS: I would advise that anyone taking on this project make sure there's a support system available for any of the younger children who might be confronting the issue for the first time. Also, they should make sure to involve the parents in the process so they know what's happening and can also be available to support the students.

EC: I would emphasize that listening to everyone is important. I think that's the hardest part of it, to try to really understand what the young people are experiencing rather than introducing one's own belief system or anxieties. I think that's the hardest thing. I would caution people about looking to children for the solutions to problems that we've created. In other words, dumping it on young people. I don't think that's fair or realistic. Young people have some power in political processes, but clearly we have a great deal more than they do. So I think we need to support them, we need to include them in the process but not exploit them. I think one has to be very careful about charges of bias in these studies, to devise a protocol that is as objective as possible.

* * * * *

The videotape "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me" was produced by Intersection Associates for International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and Educators for Social Responsibility.

"THERE'S A NUCLEAR WAR GOING ON INSIDE ME"

Transcript of a 26 minute videotape of
Classroom Discussions with Dr. Eric Chivian and Ms. Roberta Snow

10 year old girl: I don't know, sometimes I just feel like there's a nuclear war going on inside me.

Roberta Snow: It's become apparent to educators across the country that children and adolescents are worried about nuclear war and there's been an increase in the amount of anxiety and misinformation that kids are bringing into the classroom; and so we began to look at what is it that kids are saying about the nuclear world, what are their concerns, how are they finding out about it and without bringing in information to them, what is it that they need to tell us about nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

Eric Chivian: We thought it was important in beginning this project to interview children face to face in their classroom settings, with their teachers present in a setting that would provide them with a maximum amount of comfort and ease. And we asked questions in a way that would not affect the kinds of things that we were hearing, that would not be introducing the subject to the children. So we tried very much to be facilitators of what they were saying and thinking and feeling.

PS: We deliberately chose those classes that had no previous nuclear education course or teacher-directed activity.

EC. In the interviews that follow, with six to 16-year-olds, young people are expressing their thoughts and feelings about the threat of nuclear war. We hope you will listen carefully to what they have to say.

* * * * *

1st grade, Driscoll Public School, Brookline, MA
(6-7 year olds)

Boy 1: On the news once I heard about nuclear war and, um, right when I went, a few minutes after I went to sleep, and I had all these rotten, bad dreams about it.

EC: Can you tell us what the dreams were like?

Boy 1: Like people would, the police would have to block off the streets and, so nobody goes in there and gets their car blown up and, you know, killed.

Boy 2: My mother and father sometimes when it's late at night and I stay up, when they go in the kitchen they start talking about nuclear war, um, if there is going to be a war and I had a dream about a war near my house and my house got blown up. (laughter)

Girl 1: It's not funny.

EC: What did you feel?

Boy 2: I felt that we were going to have a war.

EC: Do you still feel that?

Boy 2: Yes.

Boy 3: Usually, when some sort of plane flies over or something, I'm not sure what kind it is, and I'm sort of scared that it may be the war plane.

Girl 2: I was sitting in my bed and, um, I was dreaming that I was, um, fighting nuclear war, and I got killed.

EC: How have other people heard the word "nuclear"?

Boy 4: On the news.

EC: What on the news?

Boy 4: Like when they're talking about the war, like if there's going to be a war, you know, like if they're talking about, like if they're going to say that there's going to be World War III, you know, they might talk about the nuclear war.

EC: So you've heard it on the news, on television?

Boy 4: Yeah.

EC: What did it make you think about?

Boy 4: Dying. (laughter)

EC: Dying?

Boy 4: Yeah, dying.

EC: What do you mean?

Boy 4: Dying in the war.

EC: ...Yes.

Girl 3: Well, I heard it on the news like when they would say the Russians, um, are planning, um, to fight, um, Americans, and, um, it made me feel like, um, a little worried about it and everything.

EC: Those things you thought about, did you ever ask or talk to your parents about them?

Boy 5: Yeah.

EC: What did they say?

Boy 5: Well, they said that we might have a war, we might not, but they say don't be afraid cause, um, you're not going to get hurt in the war.

EC: What do you think?

Boy 5: I think I won't, but I don't know until there is one.

EC: Does anyone feel that there's anything they can do about this problem? Yes...

Boy 3: Um, for that parade that they had I think that may help and it may stop the nuclear war.

Boy 5: I think we might try and speak about it instead of using guns and killing people.

EC: What do you think?

Girl 3: What I think we can do to stop the war is that we can vote.

EC: Hmmm.

Girl 3: How many people do and how many people don't.

EC: That will help?

RS: What can we vote for?

Girl 3: If you want a war, you do. If there's more if you want a war, we'll have it, if there's more if you don't, then they won't.

Boy 4: I think it's a good idea to talk about it now, cause this might stop the nuclear war.

EC: What do you think?

Boy 4: Sometimes I just think about if there's a war it's going to be in an hour or something.

EC: Can you picture it?

Boy 4: Yeah, I can picture it. All the police coming, all the bombs falling out of the sky and all the planes exploding the trees, (Laughter) and the houses catching on fire. (Laughter)

EC: But, let me ask you...several people have said stuff like that. How does that affect you? You know, you go to school, and you go play with friends, and you say you sometimes think about that. How does it affect you?

Boy 4: Sometimes it really, like, scares me. Sometimes I hope there never will be one again. And I know there's only been two so far that were big ones, like World War I and World War II, and I hope there is no World War III, wherever it is.

* * * * *

3rd grade, Lincoln Public School, Brookline, MA
(8-9 year olds)

Boy 1: I heard about nuclear weapons when I was going to an army base with my uncle. I was going to an army base with him, he was going to show me around. And then he was talking to me in the car when we were going there; he was talking to me like that a few nuclear bombs could wipe out the whole world.

EC: And how did that make you feel?

Boy 1: It made me feel weird. Scared at night.

EC: Scared at night?

Boy 1: I was scared almost half the week because I thought a nuclear bomb was going to fall down and blow up the whole world.

EC: Blow up the whole world. How have other kids heard about nuclear weapons?

Boy 2: The first time I ever heard about nuclear missiles I heard it on the news that a nuclear missile has three warheads inside, and I was scared. And when my sister heard about it she started crying and I had a terrible dream.

Boy 3: And I just worried that I might die and I don't want nuclear wars to happen cause they're like, dangerous, and...

EC: You're worried about it.

Boy 3: Yeah.

EC: What when you think about these things, what comes into your mind? Do you see things or imagine things, picture things in your mind?

Boy 3: Well, I just see a lot of area that don't have any houses and its a lot of broken houses and no people around cause there's been a nuclear war. All gases and stuff.

EC: What's that like?

Boy 3: Scary.

EC: What do other people see, sort of picture in their minds?

Boy 4: Hear about how you're going to get killed with nuclear bombs, and sometimes I didn't want to go to sleep cause I was afraid I was going to have a really bad dream about nuclear war and how I was going to get killed or something.

EC: What did you think about; what did you imagine in your mind or picture?

Boy 4: Well, that maybe my parents, my friends and all my family would get killed and I'd just be alive and I wouldn't know what to do or anything. I'd be stuck.

Boy 5: I'd have nightmares or something and that my parents and my brother and sister were killed or something.

EC: That you would survive?

Boy 5: Yeah, or something. Maybe. And I'd have...practically everybody else was killed around.

Girl 1: I sometimes think that I'd rather be dead, because then I could go up to heaven and I wouldn't have to worry about all this stuff about nuclear war.

EC: How does it affect other people's thinking about nuclear war?

Girl 2: If I did survive, even if there was enough food, I'd probably kill myself or I'd just die of sadness because all my family and all the people I love would die.

Boy 6: I think I'd rather live in B.C. where there were no people. Well, there were people, but there were no war kinds. And I think that, I always keep on thinking that when I grow up I'm going to be an astronaut, but I think I'm never going to be one. War's going to keep on going on and nuclear missiles are going to keep on bombing countries and stuff. I think I will be dead and I'll never survive.

EC: Yes...

Boy 7: When I grow up I wanted to be an inventor, like invent new houses or...and I'm sort of scared that I'm never going to be able to do that because, you know, they're going to make more missiles to just fight with instead of using them to blow up other missiles... which would help, but they won't do that.

Girl 2: I tell my mom that I'm never going to have a child because if I do then I'll die and also my child will. And I'm not that scared about myself because I'm myself, I'm one person, but, like, you know, like if everybody in the world got killed then there'd be nobody left.

* * * * *

5th grade, Lawrence Public School, Brookline, MA
(10-11 year olds)

Boy 1: If we blow up this planet there's no more life in this solar system... I don't know, it just seems...I was listening to the radio one time when it said that they were bombing in World War...and they were bombing and the people were running from...when the first bomb hit the people were running and their skin was just like falling off and withering up and falling away and it was like puddles of blood and bones. It just seems real...

EC: This was at Hiroshima?

Boy 1: Yeah. It was really scary and then the people that did survive, they got to another city and when they got there they were bombed and they died anyways. It seems...not fair.

Boy 2: A man, he was a "vetrian" of the war, and he was 84 years old now and he had burns on his legs because all the gases and acids and he says that the people in Hiroshima's eyes melted because of the heat and the radiation.

Girl 1: I see images like of fires and everyone screaming and crying.

Girl 2: If there's a nuclear war, you won't have fun, you can't have any more beauty, and when you think of it, when you see a field, with maybe long grass and you're just looking, you might all of a sudden think, oh my God, this is so pretty, I mean, I can't believe this, when, after a nuclear bomb, you'll never see it again.

Girl 3: When I think of growing up and of nuclear...like when...sometimes when I think growing up, I think of, you know, like getting a good job and living until you know, I die instead of being killed, and when I think of nuclear weapons I think of not even getting there, not even growing up, just kind of dying, and it doesn't, it change...it seems, it gives me a picture of...myself being like, you know, having to be careful of, you know, threats on the radio and bombs that are going to be coming towards us and everything. And just sort of changes my imagination of growing up and when I'm old and everything.

Boy 3: If I do grow up, I will want to spend all my time, or at least a lot of it, trying to fight against it cause I don't want to, I want...if I do grow up, for other people to have a chance to grow up...not just grown-ups.

Girl 4: Well, I want to grow up...in the year 2000, I'll only be 30... and I want to live til I'm at least 80 or 85, but, and sometimes when I do that...I can just imagine myself in a coffin and then being put into a grave where I just get shoved into some dirt or something. The coffin gets shoved into the dirt, and I don't want that to be my future.

Boy 4: I think one way to get rid of nuclear bombs is to march like Martin Luther King did, you know, and make speeches and all and everything like that.

Girl 1: Why can't we just go and take those bombs apart and throw them away?

Girl 2: I think you should really stop and take a look because the beauty of the world is really, it's expensive and nobody can buy that. And you can't. If you blow it up, you have no more left and it's worth a lot.

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7th grade, Lincoln Public School, Brookline, MA
(12-13 year olds)

Boy 1: And, like when I think about nuclear missiles and stuff, I think, like we're all talking, and all of a sudden, one would go off and we'd have no place to go, and the lights would go out, and everything would just, you know, be dead, and that really, that makes me scared. You know, I'm walking along and I can just imagine a bomb going off and hearing sirens going off...and nothing.

Boy 2: If the government found out that another country was shooting enough missiles at us to blow up the United States, would they tell us, or would they just wait for us to, you know, see missiles? (Laughter) You know, would they broadcast it, or because it would just cause a lot of panic and it wouldn't really, you know, help it.

Boy 3: Even if there were time to go somewhere, I mean, you couldn't, because like everyone would be trying to escape -- the highways and the airports and everything would be all crowded and you couldn't, you wouldn't be able to go anywhere.

Girl 1: It's just sort of stupid, in a way, because they're so worried about...they're really upset about killing...those people die and yet they're risking other people's lives in case there's a war again.

EC: Now who are you referring to?

Girl 1: The Russians and the United States, both.

EC: How does it make you feel? Yes...

Boy 4: Pretty hopeless. You know, it's so dangerous what we're playing with and it really sounds like we're playing with it cause, I don't know, what are...I'm not sure what the issues are...I'm not sure if anybody besides, maybe the government, if there are any issues that we're arguing about that are so, um, so against each other that we have to use things like this. What, like usually when you get into a fight, you have a reason, you don't just hit him. You say, no, that's not so or that's what I believe, that's not what you believe, but I don't think, I don't see our difference with, for instance, the Soviet Union.

Boy 5: We were allies, weren't we, in World War II?

Boy 4: And even if there was, what are we fighting about now?

Girl 2: When I think about it, I sort of get scared for a while. Then I sort of figure, well, it's not going to happen to us, but, in a way, it could, but I sort of put it off and I don't think about it that much.

Boy 6: There was a big program on the United States power and stuff, and who has more power, the United States or the Soviet Union, and I was watching, and to sit there and watch these guys in tanks riding across the television screen, you know, thinking that you could, that has some effect on you and then they start shooting and stuff, and, you know, just thinking that they could be blowing you up with that. It makes you feel weird. It has an effect on you like, you know, you think that you could be inside that tank and firing those missiles.

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9th grade, Cambridge Rindge & Latin Public School, Cambridge, MA
(14-16 year olds)

Girl 1: I'm not angry, I'm frustrated with having to deal with this and knowing that, I mean, you can't really think about your future at this age, because who knows what's going to happen and we may not have a future if some kind of war does break out. And, um, just, it really dampens everyone's hope, sometimes...It just doesn't seem like you can look forward to anything, and it just makes me angry that, just some people's stupidity, how they handle the situation. You know, I just recently realized that some, you know, maybe one of these days, maybe we won't even make it to 30. Who knows.

EC: To 30?

Girl 1: I don't know...but then again, you know, I try not to be too negative about it. I just...

Boy 1: You get a few crazy people who press a couple of buttons and blow up the world.

EC: How does that make you feel?

Boy 2: Scared, kind of.

EC: Like what? I mean, how do you describe that?

Boy 2: Just like, someone could say if they want us dead or not; if someone makes a mistake then we have to die too.

Boy 3: You know, if everyone else I knew in just this general area was gonna go, I'd want to too. I keep thinking...a handful of survivors, I wouldn't want to be one of the survivors.

EC: Do other people feel that way?

Girl 2: I wouldn't want to survive either because everything else would be gone and you would have nothing to look forward to because schools and some buildings would be knocked over and there wouldn't be any grass or animals left.

EC: How does it make you feel?

Girl 2: Like, what it would be like?

EC: Do you imagine it, or do you picture it?

Girl 2: No, cause I can't imagine what it would be like.

Boy 3: If there's a war, it's going to be bang bang, not boom, you know, like not dropping bombs. So, why do they have the bombs if they're not going to be dropping them? That's something I just don't understand.

Girl 3: Politicians tell us you just dig a hole and put a door on it and put dirt on top and go in; you're okay, but I don't think it's true. You know, if we explode all these bombs, it's going to destroy the ecology. The plants all die and the animals, and the ozone gets destroyed. You know, I mean, what do we do, you know?

EC: So you're all 14-15 in the 9th grade and I imagine a lot of you have some thoughts about what your life's going to be like in five years, 10 years, 20 years. Now, I wonder if, what your thoughts are about that, and if, in any way, these kinds of thoughts about nuclear weapons and war affect that, in any way? What happens to people?

Boy 4: I'm planning to get married. If this does happen, right, if radiation does get to my wife while she's pregnant, right, you know, what then? It's like, what's my baby going to turn out to be, like a monster or something? (Laughter)

EC: You think about that?

Boy 4: Yeah, yes, not exactly the monster...the radiation poisoning would effect the fetus, right?

EC: That's right.

Boy 4: So, it could some out with retardation or something. That's what I think.

EC: How does that affect you if that's true?

Boy 4: In a way it would sadden me because, you know, it would hurt me in a way, if I gave birth to, that I helped give birth to, you know, to something that isn't quite what I expected. What I see all the time in other people's child, children. So, it would sadden me.

Boy 5: Parent's try to shelter you from all the things you got to face in life. They try to shield you from what you're going to have to find out sooner or later. You know I don't think it's right. Some parents are afraid to bring the subject up because sometimes they might not know anything about it.

Boy 3: I think it would be someone from our generation that would change it, because people older than us, they have their fixed opinions, and we're growing up against it, more or less. I think everyone I know is growing up against it. You know, I don't hear any kids my age going, "Yeah, yeah, let's go and shoot off a few bombs." I mean, I don't really hear that many older people saying that either, but they're the ones that have them, not us, and we don't want them. So if it's changed, I think it will be someone from our generation, but it's going to take a little while.

END COMMENTS AS BACKGROUND TO CREDITS:

5th Grade

Girl 3: I think that in a nuclear war nobody could win because they'd just destroy each other and I don't think anybody could live through it.

Girl 2: I wish we didn't have to have them, I mean, you don't want to die, and if I can only live to go to 8th grade, I don't think...

9th Grade

Boy 5: If we can work together, the adults can work together and we're practically at that stage now, anybody agree with me?

5th Grade

Girl 1: Why can't we just go and take those bombs apart and throw them away?

Boy 4: I think one way to get rid of nuclear bombs is to march like Martin Luther King did, you know, and make speeches and all and everything like that.

9th Grade

Boy 5: I think it's important to let the people know that the kids should have a say in the matter and that they also know what's going on. Right?

5th Grade

Girl 2: I think you should really stop and take a look because the beauty of the world is really, it's expensive and nobody can buy it, and if you blow it up, you have no more left and it's worth a lot.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE VIDEOTAPE

"WHAT SOVIET CHILDREN ARE SAYING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

An Interview with Dr. Eric Chivian by Lucile Burt

Lucile Burt: Is this videotape part of a larger project?

Eric Chivian: The videotape "What Soviet Children are Saying About Nuclear Weapons" was not the first tape project. The first sets of tapes were made by Roberta Snow and myself with American children. The Soviet tape was really a direct result of the startling findings on the American tape that suggested the idea that one should interview and get such videotape recordings from children in many countries to learn how much kids know about nuclear weapons and how it affects them. And because of the questions, is this an American phenomenon, is this a Western phenomenon, or is this a phenomenon worldwide in industrialized countries, we have set up an international study about children and the threat of nuclear war, and this tape is part of that study.

LB: What other countries will be part of the study?

EC: So far, we've done work in the U.S., the Soviet Union, and very preliminary work in Great Britain. There are plans to take this work to Hungary, which I'll probably do following the next IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) Congress in June, 1985, which will be in Budapest, and to do a preliminary questionnaire survey in Japan. The first year will focus, however, on the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and we'll go to other parts of the U.S. as well, outside of the greater Boston area, the East Coast area, which have been the usual places that have been studied.

The second year and perhaps the third as well we'll focus on Europe -- Eastern and Western Europe -- and the countries that we've targeted -- mostly because of their international interest but also because of the level of contacts that we have in these countries through the IPPNW -- are the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Sweden.

And then the final year, we hope to get interviews with children in China and India and Japan. And my suspicion is that children in all these countries will say very similar things.

LB: What are the goals of the project?

EC: The study has three major goals. The first is to understand how the nuclear issue affects kids, and we're looking at that through controlled questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews.

The second part of the study is to learn as much as we can about an area that has been very little studied, which is how kids develop ideas about people in other countries. In other words, the hypothesis is that young kids don't share or don't have the stereotyped ideas about people in other countries being different and alien and somehow dangerous that adults tend to develop. They don't have the same concepts of nationalism. And we're asking the questions how does this develop, when does it develop, and what are the influences on kids in this area?

The third part of the study in some ways is the most important, and that is to create a body of material that can be used to challenge people's ideas about other people around the world. The Soviet videotape has been perhaps most illustrative of that goal in that videotape materials offer a surprisingly inexpensive and effective way of exposing large groups of people in one country to the ideas and thoughts and feelings and humanity of people in other countries in a way that no other medium allows.

LB: Many people have asked how you got to do the interviews in the Soviet Union, and particularly what assistance you had from either the U.S. or Soviet government.

EC: What made this project possible was the close and long-term relationship between Soviet and American physicians in the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War group. Being one of the co-founders of that group in 1980, and having spent many, many hours with Senior Soviet physicians over the course of the last four years, I and they have gotten to know and trust each other very closely, as have other American and Soviet physicians in this organization. And it's become clear to us that, although we differ in many areas, this issue of nuclear war is one where we're very close where we agree entirely about the nature of the problem and what must be done about it.

I got the idea, after going over the American videotape that Roberta Snow and I made, that if the Soviets were able to see American children, they'd be very moved by them, and that might allow for their willingness to help me and John Mack and Jerry Waletzky and others set up a similar project in the Soviet Union. So I brought a copy of Bobbi's and my tape to a meeting that International Physicians held in the Hague in November, 1982, and I showed the videotape to all the physicians there.

Some 20 countries were represented, including the Soviet Union. And afterwards, Dr. Chazov and Academician Ilyin, who was also there, said they were very upset by what these children were saying, and they said to me, "I wonder what Soviet children would say." So I asked them whether they would help us set up a project and Chazov said "yes", which is exactly what I wanted them to say.

I didn't hear from him for about two or three months. I finally got a telex saying that he had asked the State Committee for Radio and Television if they were interested in a project of interviewing and videotaping children. They had "agreed in principle" that it was an interesting idea and that I should write to Mr. Lev Korolev, who is the Director of the international section of Soviet television, so I did. I wrote him a proposal introducing myself, saying that it was very important for us to find out about what Soviet children knew about nuclear weapons and how it affected them, and that we had done similar studies in this country. We wanted to come to the Soviet Union. We were coming as psychiatrists to study children psychologically, not to put them in politically embarrassing positions. We were not there to make points. We wanted to bring our own interpreter and not have our questions submitted beforehand, and to pick the kids we wanted to interview. I got a telex back saying they approved of this idea in principle and could I provide more details. Over the course of the next couple of months, several exchanges of letters and telexes went back and forth, and it was finally approved. We went at the end of July in 1983.

The U.S. government was not in any way involved in this project. To my knowledge, I don't know of any direct involvement of the Soviet government, although since Dr. Chazov is a very powerful and important person in the Soviet Union, being the Deputy Minister of Health, head of their Cardiology Institute and of the medical unit treating the Politburo, I would suspect that people at very high levels approved the project. The reason I suspect that is the freedom we got to move around and to do essentially whatever we wanted. I have been told by other people who have done research in the Soviet Union that this freedom was extraordinary.

LB: How did you go about choosing those camps?

EC: The Soviets initially wanted to send us to Artek. Artek is the big state-run Pioneer Camp on the Black Sea. At the time we were there, Samantha Smith was just finishing her visit to Artek. And we were also concerned that if we went to Artek our findings wouldn't be considered very credible for several reasons. One is that Samantha Smith was there and all the political furor that was raised by her trip. Another was that foreigners were always taken to Artek. It's the show place. At the same time we did want

go to a large state-run camp because those are the camps where you meet kids from all over the Soviet Union, in contrast to the other Pioneer camps which are local. There's only one other camp like that to my knowledge called Orlyonok, which is also on the Black Sea but in the Caucasus.

We also asked that we be allowed to visit a "run of the mill" Pioneer camp, that is, a Pioneer camp run by one of the trade unions, not by the state; a camp that was local. And they selected a camp called Gargarin, which is near Moscow. I'm told by some Soviet emigrees that it's not the most representative camp because Gargarin is run by the Aeroflot employees of a domestic airport near Moscow, and Aeroflot employees, being in transportation, are probably in security-sensitive positions and therefore more likely to follow the party line. I don't know quite what to make of that because we saw the children of people who swept the bathrooms at the airport who were also Aeroflot employees as well as senior engineers, but obviously not part of the party hierarchy. In any case, it was a general Pioneer camp that was near Moscow. The kids did not have to compete to get into it. They were simply children of people in the trade union.

This last trip, in June of 1984, we went to Leningrad. We said we wanted to visit another Pioneer camp. We wanted to interview more kids. And to show you how unplanned and set up the selection of the camp was, the camp that we were supposed to go to was cancelled at the last minute because it turned out that they weren't open yet at the time we were there. At the very last minute, and late at night, Pavel, the director from Soviet television who accompanied us on the first two trips and did some translation, had to find another Pioneer camp which would allow us to come. We finally visited a camp run by a factory that made fountain pens and other writing equipment called Soyuz, which means "the union", 70 kilometers north of Leningrad.

So we did not select the camps in any of the cases and there would be no way that we could select them. But within the camps that were selected for us, we had complete control over the selection process of the kids interviewed and studied.

LB: Did you notice any difference in the kids in the two camps?

EC: I didn't notice it at the time. The kids at Gagarin were probably a bit poorer than the kids at Orlyonok. But we asked the professions of the parents in every case and there were as many factory workers, chauffeurs, miners and construction workers in both camps so far as we could tell. It's not an easy question to answer. We asked the members of the kids' council to help us select kids for the interviews and they very often selected themselves or their close friends. I think one can infer, and I think rightly so, that the kids in the

council are probably already selected. It's the kids who select the councils, not the adults, but they're probably the leaders and they're probably therefore more articulate and probably a bit brighter than the average kid. The kids from Gargarin did not seem all that different to us either in terms of their information or their intelligence from the kids in Orlyonok. And I think in both cases it's fair to say that it wasn't a truly representative sample of Soviet kids. They were probably brighter and more informed than the average Soviet child.

That was not true, I felt, in the camp near Leningrad that we visited in June. Those kids seemed quite a bit less informed. They were in general clearly lower on the socio-economic scale than the kids in either Gagarin or Orlyonok. Their parents worked for a factory as opposed to being engineers or lawyers or physicians. They were not the intelligensia, and that seemed pretty clear.

LB: And you felt they had less information?

EC: I felt they had less information although this is only an impression because we really did not do the kind of extensive interviews in the Leningrad camp that we did last year. We were much more interested in doing human portraits and we were there for a very short time, a day and a half.

LB: In the original camps you had longer?

EC: We spent three full days at Gagarin and three full days at Orlyonok, and we spent a lot of time with the kids, playing with them, both before and after the taping.

LB: That explains why, people have noticed, they seem very relaxed when they are talking.

EC: We spent a lot of time before we started interviewing, playing games with them, showing pictures of our kids, talking about life in America. I brought my daughter's Sony Walkman and rock tapes. They listened to my daughter's tapes. It was wonderful. We had a ping pong contest. We were badly beaten. We had an art contest. We spent a lot of time beforehand getting to know them and it was just wonderful.

LB: How were you introduced to them?

EC: We introduced ourselves. The camp director in the case of Gagarin introduced us to the council. They knew in advance that Americans were coming to the camp with a television crew, but they didn't know the subject of our visit.

We were, by the way, the first Americans ever to go to Gagarin. The camp had been around for thirty years. We were the first

Americans these kids had ever seen. It was an unreal situation. They were crowding around us like we were from another planet. We were the first Americans any of them, ever in Orlyonok, had ever sat with face-to-face and spoken to.

We were introduced as people from the U.S. who were there to interview Soviet children. I introduced myself as being from International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, but that was the first time they had ever heard the word nuclear.

We did that in both camps, in all three camps actually. At the Pioneer camp near Leningrad, Bobbi and I debated whether we should tell them anything about peace or nuclear stuff before the interview because it would bias it, and clearly it does bias it, but we also felt it wouldn't be fair to not tell them that we were going to be asking these questions and to just spring it on them. And there was this very interesting, moving moment where the adults who were with us knew what we were there for but the kids didn't know at all. They just knew we were Americans; we were there to talk to them and interview them and we had a television crew with us, but they didn't know the subject. They were sort of vague about what did we really want to know and asked general questions. Bobbi and I were deliberately avoiding telling them the subject, and then finally we looked at each other and said that we really should tell them. And we said we were there to learn about how much Soviet kids knew about nuclear weapons and how it affected them and that's what we've done in the United States and other countries as well. The kids looked really shocked. And upset -- really upset. And there was a lot of talking amongst themselves -- I don't know what they were saying -- and it was clear, it was very clear, unless they were Academy Award actors, they couldn't have faked how surprised they were. They really didn't know why we were there beforehand. And that was nice to see, that they had not been prepared. And then one little boy who sings a song on the tape said, "Are you more interested in courage or information?" Great question. And, in fact, our experiences at both Gargarin and Onlyonok where the kids answered our questions spontaneously with much personal detail and without the kind of hesitation that you find when one is reading a script, convinced us without any doubt that these kids were not prepared for our questions beforehand.

LB: How did you answer the Leningrad boy's question?

EC: We said, probably both.

Even though the kids did the selecting for our interviews, and the adults did not take part in that, we couldn't prove that they were not prepared beforehand and that secretly the camp directors didn't choose and prepare these kids. So to make sure that we had access to any kid we wanted, we selected kids directly, without the children's council.

In the three days we were at each camp, various kids would come up to us and identify themselves, or we'd have some other interaction with them. We'd ask permission to interview this child. And every child that we picked we were allowed to interview. And we did that this June as well. So in other words, for them to have prepared the kids beforehand, since they didn't have any of the questions we were going to ask in their hands, would have meant that they would have had to have given an all-night course to every child in the camp. Gagarin had 350 kids and Orlyonok had 2800 kids.

We met with the director of Orlyonok and we asked him, how is this camp organized, and he said, there's one sub-camp that has 700 kids, another with 500 kids, etc., etc. He went through all the five sub-camps. And we said, we want to do the interviews in this sub-camp and we want to do the questionnaire in that sub camp; we had complete freedom to pick whichever place we wanted to be.

LB: So you felt confident that the kids were giving genuine answers that were their own?

EC: That's right. Exactly. And all the stories, with all the little kids we spoke to through our own interpreter, checked about what the kids had been told about our arrival and why we were there.

LB: What reaction did you get from adults, the camp directors, or any other Soviet adults who were conscious of your project?

EC: Interesting. The video crew was a sophisticated television crew that has a lot of dealings with foreigners, especially this particular division, the International Division, which deals with foreign journalists. They were very surprised at what the kids were saying. So what was clear to us is that Soviet adults are not all that different from American adults. They really don't know what's going on with kids. Some Soviet adults thought we would be wasting our time. They thought Soviet kids wouldn't know much about nuclear weapons. They wouldn't say very much about it. Even they have the same kind of denial and, I think, protectiveness about kids, that hopefully they're not worried or upset or aware, that we do.

LB: Some people have said they think the Soviet kids seemed less emotional than American kids. Do you think that's true? Is it a cultural difference?

EC: It's complicated. I think Soviet kids are, in general, a bit more restrained especially with adults, much more polite, much more European. When they're by themselves, they're not so restrained. We witnessed that in all kinds of ways -- kids running after each other, kids play-fighting, a fair amount of flirting going on, whooping and hollering and racing around, the usual kinds of things one would expect from children.

It was a very artificial situation. Not only had they never seen Americans before, they had never been on television before, and here they were being interviewed about nuclear war, which to them is a very serious topic, very serious, not something that they would laugh or smile or joke about, by Americans whom they've never seen before, interviewed by television cameras, thinking they might be on American television. So they were trying to make very good impressions and may have seemed less emotional.

When we met with a senior Soviet commentator on television and asked him...you see, the Soviet videotapes were shown on Soviet television as were Bobbi's and my American tapes, parts of them... I asked him how Soviets felt about the tapes. He said that they were a bit upset by the Soviet kids' tape because the Soviet kids seemed a bit more wooden and less emotional than the American kids. And I said that was pretty funny because when we've shown both tapes to American audiences, Americans are a little upset because the American kids seem less informed than the Soviet kids. So we're competing about who's the most emotional, who's the most informed, who's got the better kids. It's pretty funny.

LB: The Soviet kids knew, didn't they, that this tape was going to be shown in America?

EC: They were told that there was a good chance that these tapes would be shown on national television in the United States.

LB: And if I understand right, you didn't have this whole project in mind when you made "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me." Did you say to those kids they might be shown to Soviet kids?

EC: We didn't say they might be shown to Soviets. We did say that they would be likely to be on television. And actually when Bobbi and I interviewed the third grade, there was an NBC film crew filming simultaneously and the children ended up on the "NBC Nightly News". So the idea of being on television was true for both sets of kids. But the issue of being seen in the Soviet Union for the American kids was not.

LB: Do you want to say something about what we see as our kids being less knowledgeable? Do you think that was true?

EC: I think it is true. I think Soviet kids certainly have as much information as American kids. I think they have more at an earlier age and in most cases the information is accurate. We were amazed at how sophisticated the responses were from really quite young kids.

They know a lot of political things about Pershings and cruise missiles and the negotiations breaking down. They knew it from a Soviet perspective but they knew much more about it than a comparable group of American kids would know. But they also know a lot of facts, and that was terribly important to us because we went with a transcript of a CBS newscast which said that Soviet kids are not told anything about nuclear weapons quite purposely, because the government is not wanting to scare them against weapons that they someday may have to use. This newscast was completely uninformed and went out nationally over CBS. We found that that wasn't true at all, that kids found out about this information mostly by the mass media, mostly by television. They talked a lot about various television programs that had a lot of information about nuclear weapons but also they found out through parents, magazines, overhearing conversations, etc. And it was interesting to see how well-informed they were.

LB: Other people have said that they were surprised that there was no anti-American sentiment expressed at all. Did you find any? Did you hear any?

EC: There was no anti-American sentiment at all. But there was a lot of anti-Reagan sentiment -- anti-Reagan, anti-Weinberger, anti-Pentagon, anti-capitalists-who-make-these weapons sentiment. Reagan was probably the most unpopular figure in the world to those children. Some children talked about the fact that they were convinced that he was out to take over the world. All the things that one hears the right wing in this country saying about the Soviets, they would say about Reagan.

But to them Americans were different. They were separate from their government. Americans were people, just like they were people. They wanted peace too. And there were very moving and wonderful comments by kids saying Americans and Soviets were essentially the same.

We did not include those anti-Reagan, anti-Weinberger, anti-Pentagon comments in the videotape or the Soviet kids for this reason: although we made the raw tapes available to all the networks that wanted to show them and some of them did use those materials (in the "Today" show and "Nightline" for example), we wanted a tape that could be shown in both countries that illustrated the psychological questions involved about nuclear weapons without bringing in so much of the political issues.

We are <u>not</u> looking at the issue of stereotyping in this study. When we do, we will use some of those materials. We were most concerned, I think, that if we made a Soviet tape that was anti-Reagan that either the American television networks or the Soviet television networks would run it as a political weapon for their

own purposes. If we made a tape of American kids that was anti-Soviet, the Soviets could run it and say look how American kids are indoctrinated to hate us. The Americans could run it and say look how deep and widespread distrust and fear of the Soviets is. So we wanted to remove that from the first study. We thought it would jeopardize the study. We felt comfortable doing that, one because we made the full tapes available to anybody who wanted to see them, especially television; and two, because we will include those materials at a later time. That wasn't the subject of this study.

LB: So it was really a distinction between government and citizens that they were making.

EC: Which I'm not sure a comparable group of American kids would make, although we haven't really looked into that.

LB: It's interesting since they know we choose our leaders.

EC: They know we choose our leaders, but they also feel -- and it's not so hard to feel this even if you live here -- that some of those choices are based on money and power, and that the common man sometimes can't be heard. And they believe that capitalists are very powerful, and the military-industrial complex determines elections, etc. They feel those things and are told those things, and obviously some of that's true.

It's a very interesting question if you've interviewed a bunch of American kids what would they say about the Soviets and would they make the distinction between the Kremlin and the military and the people. I don't know. We need to find that out.

LB: How much footage of videotape did you have?

EC: Nine hours. Nine hours last year and we've got over eight hours this year, so we've got a total of over 17 hours of Soviet kids. Almost all of it's kids. We've also taped four hours of British kids and our original five hours of American kids, so we've got over 26 hours of tape now on children in the three countries.

LB: How do you do the editing? Do you do it yourself?

EC: "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me" was edited by Bobbi and myself with a great deal of help from Susu Wing of Intersection. For the Soviet tape, I did the selection of material. I spent almost the entire month of August watching the tapes over and over again. Again the Intersection Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with Susu Wing and John McGannon, did all the technical preparation of the materials, and designed the introduction.

LB: Did you want to say anything else about how you went about selecting, what you were looking for, how you made choices?

EC: We only used 4-1/2 hours out of the original nine hours for one because we still haven't done a voice-over on the other 4-1/2.

There's still a lot of material we haven't even looked at. I tried to select passages that I thought best summed up what the kids were saying. I obviously, as one inevitably does, picked kids who I thought were more attractive and more eloquent than others. If some kid was struggling to say something and another kid said it beautifully and poetically, I picked the kid who said it beautifully and poetically. The children were surprisingly handsome and articulate to begin with, so it wasn't all that hard to do.

I also ended up picking kids simply because of the difficulty in translation and the difficulty in reviewing edited material in another language. You know how hard it is in your own language, but if you're doing it in another language that becomes even more complicated. Three groups out of the five that we used were groups with me as interviewer so that I knew the content of the interviews beforehand. And then there was one group of John Mack's and one group of Jerry Waletzky's.

LB: Is this videotape propaganda?

EC: If you define propaganda as material that the Soviets feel that it is in their interest to have seen, then clearly this is propaganda because the Soviets do believe it is in their interest for people to know how their children are thinking and feeling about nuclear weapons.

At this point in history we tend to define whatever is in the Soviet interest as not being in our own interest. I believe this material is in both our interests.

The Soviets realized that information which they would publish themselves on this subject would not be credible. So they clearly thought it was important to allow American physicians to come in to do the study. And because they want people to know what their children think and feel, they were not concerned about what information the interviews would uncover.

If you define propaganda as information which is not true, then this material is in no way propaganda because we were convinced that the children were expressing their own thoughts and feelings.

LB: Who would you like to see this tape?

EC: The initial idea, which still remains an idea, is to make a joint film by Americans and Soviets on American and Soviet kids that would be shown jointly in both countries.

I'd like to do an hour-long documentary and I love the idea that Martha Stewart, who's a photographer in New York, has done. She's made a black and white still photographic essay called "The Face of the Enemy", and it just shows American and Soviet faces back-to-back and you don't know who's who. I'd like to do a back-to-back American kid and then a Soviet kid, American kid, Soviet kid -- not exclusively that way, but mix them up, responding to the same questions. And you'll see that their answers are surprisingly similar and that they are surprisingly similar as well. Our initial goal was to make national network television programs.

I think what's become clear is the other major use of these materials is what you're doing, for educational programs, or on a local level for churches and schools to provide stimuli for discussion about not only the nuclear issue but all the larger issues about how we're getting along in this world -- or how we're not and what that's about. I'm very interested in this body of materials providing for that use.

I'd like the common person to see these tapes. I'd particularly like people who hold fairly fixed opinions about the Soviets in this country or about Americans in the Soviet Union to see tapes like these.

I think there's something very important that goes on here. And that is that, I think the impulse or tendency of people to hold onto stereotyped ideas about the enemy is clearly a very powerful one. I mean, the whole issue of nationalism that we're alike and they're different, and we are to be trusted and trust each other and they are not to be trusted. They are to be feared. I think that's a very strong impulse, the we/they, territorial, chauvinistic way of looking at the world. But I think a far stronger impulse and much more powerful is the tendency to see everyone as the same and to be moved by people's common humanity. I think there's nothing that brings that out more than children and contact. In fact, I think the only way stereotyped ideas can have a life of their own and can persist is in an atmosphere of no contact. I think as soon as there's contact, human contact, that one begins to question the basis for those ideas and to be moved by the contact in ways that are important.

With the videotapes, we're taking portraits of Soviets and Americans and showing them to tens of millions of people at once. I can think of no better way of challenging stereotyped ideas and appealing to what I think is a much stronger impulse which is to care for and identify with people in other parts of the world, and I'm impressed

with how much stronger that is than hatred and fear, which is much more fragile and much more easily given up, I think. An illustration of that was when we released the Soviet tapes in October of last year, it was barely five weeks after the Korean jetliner incident which was probably the period of some of the most anti-Soviet feeling in this country -- ever -- maybe exceeded at times in the early 50's but clearly the nadir of Soviet-American relations, and the anti-Soviet rhetoric and hatred was enormous. In spite of that the material provoked incredibly sympathetic and interested response all over the United States. Editorials written by some of the most conservative newspapers in some of the most conservative regions of the country. And it illustrated to me, one, how much interest there is in what people are like in other parts of the world, particularly other parts that you know almost nothing about and are defined as your enemy; and two, how powerful that kind of contact is.

LB: Do you think that in the interim before you make another tape that would put Soviet and American kids on the same tape, the purpose that you had in mind serving there could be served by using the two tapes together in a presentation?

EC: I think that's very powerful as well. I think there's something about seeing the kids back-to-back that's different. I'd like to put British kids in there too, simply as a counterpoint because they also say very similar things. They're speaking English but they're quite different from the American kids. They are in a different position. They're caught right in the middle of what they see as an argument between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. They say some very interesting things.

LB: Some American kids hear the Soviet kids saying "children can make a difference", and they ask what do they do to make a difference?

EC: I think Soviet kids' optimism has something to do with the fact that they are involved in so many state-run, state-sponsored, Pioneer-sponsored, adult-sponsored activities for peace. The first day of school all over the country is Peace Day and there are all kinds of activities relating to that.

The kids we interviewed said that every year, they commemorate the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, that they are involved in all kinds of art contests, it seems, for peace. And we saw repetitive artistic themes in some of their drawings, as if they do it a great deal. There are banner and poster contests in the schools, it seems, all around the country. The Soviet kids collect money for a peace fund. It's not clear to me what happens with that money, but they do that, and they feel it's very important. They go door-to-door and collect names for petitions. They write letters to world leaders and to kids in other countries.

You see posters and billboards in public places in the Soviet Union about children and peace. All of this, it seems to me, gives a very strong message to Soviet kids that, one, peace is possible; and two, kids have a say in having it occur. And they believe it. And what few studies have been done with peace activist kids in this country have shown that they too are more optimistic. It makes sense psychologically. If you can convert anxiety and dread and depression into activity you're much more likely to feel like you're doing something positive.

LB: Is there anything else you'd like people to know?

EC: We went there to study the psychology of Soviet kids. What we hadn't counted on is that by studying kids, you're really looking through a window into the culture of another country. That has all kinds of implications including strategic ones if you're talking about nuclear weapons. In other words, kids provide perhaps the most accurate, least biased portrait about what is being said about any subject in a country. They are exposed to the mass media as adults are, but their responses to it tend to be less biased and more accurate than are those of adults. So, at least on this project, we think we found out not only more about what happens to Soviet kids and the issue of nuclear war, but also what the Soviet government, through its state-run schools, and state-controlled media, is saying about the subject of nuclear weapons. And that's terribly important because one of the things they're saying in both places, in the schools and in the media, is that nuclear war would be a global, catastrophic event which is not an option for the Soviet Union because there'd be no survivors and that civil defense is essentially useless. And clearly that has very important strategic implications that we hadn't counted on learning about when we did this project.

One of the other groups of people, obviously, that I'd want to see this videotape are people in policy-making positions, in government. We've shown it to some people in the House of Representatives, and we want to show some of these materials to people in the Senate, and various think tanks, and institutes for advanced study of various kinds.

"WHAT SOVIET CHILDREN ARE SAYING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

Transcript of 21-minute videotape of interviews with Soviet children

A joint project of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and Harvard Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, Research Program for the Study of Human Continuity

Eric Chivian: This study was done to parallel similar studies done in the U.S. by many investigators over the past several years that have demonstrated that American children know a lot about nuclear weapons and are deeply affected by this knowledge. We wanted to learn whether Soviet children were similarly informed and affected.

The project was carried out at two Pioneer Camps. Pioneers are Soviet children between the ages of 10 and 15. They number between 20 and 24 million in the Soviet Union. They can be most likened to American Scouts. During the summer, they attend camps throughout the Soviet Union. Of the two camps that we visited, one was named after the Soviet cosmonaut, Gargarin. It was near Moscow, had 350 children, whose parents mostly worked at a domestic airport near Moscow. The other camp was called Orlyonok, which means "little eagle." It was a much larger camp, 2800 children, and it was located on the Black Sea in the Caucasus. Orlyonok was a different type of camp in that children came from all over the Soviet Union and were eligible to come to the camp after winning academic, athletic, artistic or citizenship competitions.

The children were interviewed either singly or in groups. In all, approximately 60 children between the ages of 10 and 15 were interviewed. The tapes that you will see represent interviews with five of these groups totalling 25 children.

We wanted to learn at what age Soviet children found out about the effects of nuclear weapons. We wanted to learn how they found out this information. We wanted to investigate what Soviet children knew about the subject of nuclear weapons and nuclear war. We wanted to know whether they believed a nuclear war would occur in their lifetime. We wanted to know whether they thought it would be possible to survive a nuclear war and, in particular, we wanted to know whether they thought shelters would help them survive. We wanted to know how this subject made them feel. We wanted to know whether they thought there were things that children could do to prevent nuclear war. And we wanted to know, finally, whether they had any messages they wanted to send to American children.

Because we wished to ensure that the children's responses reflected their own thoughts and feelings, we brought our own translator to verify that the questions asked and responses obtained were accurately and completely translated. We did not discuss beforehand what we would ask in the interviews and we carefully designed the selection and interview processes to ensure that the children were neither prompted nor prepared. Finally, although the videotapes were recorded by Soviet TV crews, we brought back all the unedited videotapes to the United States for translation and technical preparation.

* * * * *

EC: At what age have you learned about these effects? About?

Boris:
Minsk
Age 13
I found out about it first when I was seven years old, when I saw the television show, "Vremya". It was on the sixth of August commemorating the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and they showed the atomic bombardment of the city.

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13
I was eight years old and in second grade when I saw the show "International Panorama". In one of the sections of the program, I learned about the existence of nuclear weapons. After that, I began to read newspapers, and I became convinced that, about the consequences of nuclear weapons, what a threat they present.

Sveta:
Georgie[illegible]ve
Age 11
I was seven years old, in my eighth year and in school and they told us, and I also saw a documentary film. My mother and father talk about it often.

Oskana:
Moscow
Age 11
[illegible] was seven years old. In school, they talk about it and I also [illegible] a film.

Oleg:
Yakutsk
Age 14
When I was little, my parents told me about it. That nuclear war is a disastrous horror and if it begins, there won't be anything left on this earth.

EC: How have other people heard about nuclear weapons?

Irina:
Moscow
Age 13
I learned about nuclear war from the television shows "Vreyma" and "International Panorama". A lot is said on these shows about this, almost every day. And this television show is on almost everyday.

Olga:
Moscow
Age 13
I saw the television show, "Today in the World," and they showed a desert with a rocket launching platform. And they said that from one of those rockets, the entire earth could turn into a lifeless desert.

Vovo:
Moldavia
Age 12

I think about it almost every other, every day because I watch the television show, "Vremya". They constantly show, and they show how there shouldn't be any nuclear weapons.

Alla:
Minsk
Age 12

I saw a book, even, about Hiroshima and Nagasaki and saw the destruction there. There were illustrations in the book and I particularly noticed a picture of a baby, a child, all his skin was, was burned and radiated and I felt very uncomfortable.

Katya:
Moscow
Age 12

In the library gazette, there were photographs of simulated explosions in laboratories. And they showed the nearest houses too, nothing was left of the houses, but dust. In Hiroshima, I remember seeing a film, on a, on a bridge that was located not far from the epi-center of the explosion and the only thing that was left of people were their shadows. And an explosion that would happen now, an explosion that would be so much more powerful than that one, it is hard to imagine what would, I can't imagine what would become of people, if one such explosion could destroy so many people and to this day people suffer so much from that.

John Mack:

If there were a nuclear war, what would happen?

Oskana:
Moscow
Age 11

The atomic bombs were dropped a fairly long time ago, but children are still being born with the effects of radiation.

Sergei:
Moscow
Age 13

Many casualties, many, many casualties. And they will principally be people who want peace, children, old people, men, men are stronger of course than children. And many, many people will perish.

Andrei:
Moscow
Age 15

If the atomic bomb killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed, I don't, I don't even know how many, these nuclear weapons will kill a hundred times more.

Elena:
Moscow
Age 13

And if a war like that starts, it will be absolutely terrible. Nobody will be needed, not teachers, doctors. Everything, everything around will die.

Alexei:
Tambovskaya
Age 13

The entire earth will become a wasteland. All buildings will be destroyed or buildings will remain, but all living things will perish -- no grass, trees, no greenery.

Eric
Chivian:

Do any of you ever think that there might be a nuclear war in your lifetimes?

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13

Yes, but that is a horrible thought.

Boris:
Minsk
Age 13

We hope that never happens. The consequences are terrible.

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13

We don't like to believe things like that. The Soviet Union struggles for peace.

Larisa:
Serov
Age 13

We can't let war happen, because it affects too many innocent people.

Sveta:
Riazan
Age 13

War will never happen because the Soviet Union and America will, will, will come to terms.

Larisa:
Serov
Age 13

And they will understand that there shouldn't be nuclear war. No countries in the world want war and they're struggling for peace and they always will.

Valery:
Moscow
Age 14

Technology has reached a high level at the rocket installation stage. It seems to me that one person could do it all. Could push the button and that would be it. Rockets would be launched at us and we would launch rockets back.

It could start any time.

Sasha:
Byelorussia
Age 14

I think everything will be smoothed out. Well, if people really wanted it, it will happen.

Oleg:
Yakutsk
Age 14

All peoples of the world are against war and that's why, it seems to me, war will never begin.

Oleg:
Ukraine
Age 15

If all humanity gathers together, they can curtail the nuclear war. And that's why I don't think it will happen, not in our lifetime or after our lifetime.

Kira:
Minsk
Age 14

Nuclear war is very possible. It could start from any simple accident. If an American computer or our computer made a mistake, there would be war, accidentally.

EC:

Would it be possible to survive this nuclear war?

Katya:
Moscow
Age 14

What can I say. If American rockets can reach us in half an hour, there won't be even time to hide or defend oneself.

Oskana:
Moscow
Age 11

Some will live, but become diseased from the radiation and there is very little chance that they could be cured.

EC: But some people believe that you could hide underground or in a shelter and then it would be O.K.

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13
No. The air would be destroyed. The atmosphere would be destroyed.

Larisa:
Serov
Age 13
It would be impossible to live. And when you come out of the bomb shelter after that kind of catastrophe, in the city there wouldn't be anything left alive. And how can that be. You'd have to start life all over again.

Sergei:
Moscow
You couldn't survive a nuclear strike. The nuclear radioactivity remains for a very long time. And even if a person goes underground, no matter how much he wants to live, he wouldn't.

Alla:
If such an explosion were to happen somewhere, then for tens and hundreds of kilometers around the atomic particles will be distributed and everything will be destroyed. The planet will turn into a wasteland.

EC: No animals?

Alla:
Minsk
Age 14
No.

EC: Plants?

Alla:
Minsk
Age 14
Of course not. Everything will be diseased.

EC: In the whole earth?

Alla:
Minsk
Age 14
Yes.

John Mack: How does this question we're talking about make you feel inside yourselves?

Vovo:
Moldavia
Age 12
I feel pain, because when I watched a film about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, how people suffered from the radiation, how they died.

Boris:
Minsk
Age 13
We can't imagine life without our parents, friends, brothers and sisters, relatives.

Larisa:
Serov
Age 13

To think about it is bad enough, but to imagine it is even worse.

Sveta:
Riazan
Age 13

It's hard to picture living by yourself without friends or parents.

Oleg:
Ukraine

There is a film that tells how a war almost broke out between America and the Soviet Union, and after that I didn't sleep for several nights thinking about this, about how war almost broke out and how our existence is hanging on a thread.

Sveta:
Georgievskoye
Age 11

When I watch films or listen to the radio, I can imagine immediately how bombs will fall on my village. And sometimes at night, I cover myself with the blankets, because I'm afraid.

Oskana:
Moscow
Age 11

If war starts, we might all be without parents.

Eric
Chivian:

And you feel that there are things that children can do to help prevent a nuclear war?

Larisa:
Serov
Age 13

Yes, of course. Because children will live longer; they will live.

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13

They're the ones that have to live and grow and collect information.

Oleg:
Yakutsk
Age 14

Everyone thinks about their children. And we can help them by struggling against nuclear, nuclear war -- by sending letters, designing banners. These are the things that we can contribute to the struggle against nuclear war. Then they will understand that their children don't want war either.

EC:

Is there anything that you would like to say to American people, or to American young people like yourselves?

Elena:
Moscow
Age 13

I would like to wish American children, I'd like to wish that they'd struggle and fight against nuclear war and that they don't believe that it will happen. And that if in some event it does happen, that we will try very hard to stop it. And a very warm welcome from Soviet children.

Valery:
Moscow
Age 14

I don't want them to believe the bad things that are said about the Soviet Union. We are the same type of people as they. We also want peace.

Andrei:
Moscow
Age 15

And this film could help very much by telling them much more about the Soviet Union than they already know.

Olga:
Moscow
Age 13

American people are exactly like we are, exactly the same. The children are the same, and they don't want war either.

Irina:
Estonia
Age 13

We'd like to tell the children of America and the children of the world -- we say "Hello" to them.

USING THE VIDEOTAPES

INTRODUCTION

The following sections are a sharing of ideas and guidelines from many people who have used the tapes in a variety of settings for a variety of purposes. Included are reasons for showing the tapes and ideas for discussion with both adult and adolescent audiences. In addition, some follow-up activities are suggested. It is often a good idea to end a workshop, a course, or a unit of study with an opportunity for the group to consider what the next step might be, as a group or as individuals. Depending on the group response, they may be able to decide on some follow-up activity or course of action. In the case of adolescents, perhaps the most important aspect of these next steps is that the ideas and impetus for action come from the young people themselves, so that they feel encouraged to act, rather than enlisted in adult action. Many activities and questions are appropriate for either adult or adolescent audiences. At the end of this section is a list of contacts, four people who have had a good deal of experience in using the two tapes and have agreed to discuss their experiences with others.

USING "THERE'S A NUCLEAR WAR GOING ON INSIDE ME"

ADULT AUDIENCES

Reasons for showing the tape:

1. To introduce evidence that many children already know about nuclear weapons and have strong feelings and concerns about nuclear war.

2. To discuss:

   a. adult reactions which may include feelings of despair and powerlessness, anger, frustration, or possibly skepticism about the feelings expressed by the children.

   b. how adults can respond.

3. To understand the feeling and thinking of children of different ages about nuclear issues.

4. To discuss developmental stages of children as they relate to nuclear issues and appropriate adult response.

5. To gain support for including nuclear education in school curricula.

Ideas for using the tape:

With any group it is best to allow time after viewing the tape to discuss individual personal reactions. Even those audiences familiar with information about children's fears are often strongly affected by the power of the children actually expressing these concerns. Some adults might ask technical questions right away to avoid the feelings that come up. Keeping the focus, at first, on personal reactions allows time for adult feelings to be expressed. The more technical questions can be answered by giving out the interview with Roberta Snow and Dr. Eric Chivian, provided in section I of this guide, either at the beginning or end of the session.

Groups may have different concerns after viewing the tape. Citizens who do not have children of their own or who do not deal directly with young people may be concerned about what the community can do. Parents may be concerned about how to talk to their own children. Teachers may be concerned about how to take into account varying degrees of individual knowledge and readiness for discussion within a class. The focus of discussion will depend on the group's needs or interests. As much as possible, these needs should be identified at the beginning of the session. If the group is large or mixed, separating into small groups with similar concerns might be a good solution.

For audiences who are unfamiliar with studies and information regarding what children know about nuclear weapons, this tape is a good introduction. For audiences who are familiar with the information, the tape provides the

opportunity to hear specific children speaking and to think about adult responses. While there are a number of resources which discuss adult responses, it is valuable for the group to have its own discussion. People often have stories of their own which will be useful to others. Listed here are further readings on findings about what children know, think and feel about nuclear weapons as well as on how adults might respond:

Watermelons Not Bombs
Kate Cloud, Ellie Deegan, Alice Evans, Hyat Imam, Barbara Singer of the Nuclear Education Project
New Society Publishers: Philadelphia, PA; 1984

"Research on the Impact of the Nuclear Arms Race on Children in the USA"
Dr. John Mack
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Forum: Boston, MA; Winter, 1984

"Problematic Aspects of Nuclear Education"
Barbara Tizard
Harvard Educational Review: Cambridge, MA; August, 1984

Talking to Children About Nuclear War
William and Mary Wicker Van Ornum
Continuum Publishing Co.: New York; 1984

Dialogue: A Teaching Guide to Nuclear Issues
Educators for Social Responsibility; 1982

1. Sharing of Personal Stories:

Participants are asked to remember and share with another person in the group their first memory of nuclear weapons as a threat. It may be valuable for them to spend a few minutes writing or silently remembering the incident before sharing it. This allows adults to reconnect with their own feelings which are frequently similar to those they will see expressed by the children on the videotape.

2. Developmental Concerns and Needs of Children:

One successful use of this tape has been the identification of how children's concerns reflect their developmental stages. The tape can be stopped after each grade level and the group can write down what they observe about the children's thoughts and feelings and the ways these are expressed. The ideas may be generated individually or in the group. When the tape is finished, small groups can work together, first to compile lists of concerns expressed by the children, and then to brainstorm ways to address the concerns and needs of each age group.

If the group has not previously seen the videotape or is unfamiliar with this information, it might be best to have two showings of the tape: first, an uninterrupted viewing so that people have an opportunity for their feelings and reactions to surface, and then a viewing in which the tape is stopped for analysis.

Example of this activity:

Lists compiled by teachers at North Adams State Teacher Education Workshop, North Adams, MA, July, 1984

DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS AND NEEDS:

third grade:
scared, afraid, alone
directness of feelings
dreams, nightmares
gender difference: (in degree only)
  boys: concrete images of weapons
        no career planning
        repressed dying
  girls: connectedness
        rather be dead
might survive
very dependent on parents -- terrible loneliness
immediacy

fifth grade:
more gory details from boys
not fair
changed imagination about growing up
action possible (boys)
dying more physical, with details
why can't something be done?
anonymous, senseless force (1 voice only)
not people, governments
no fun and no beauty -- not just parents gone but many pleasures
very uncertain future
most graphic group
imminent loss
playing out fears

seventh grade:
powerless: fear of surprise attack
           no escape
boys have to think about military service
justice
nuclear war -- military and political leaders -- more realistic view of the world
confused: questioning authority and the senselessness -- "Stupid"
scared, then denial, conscious
personal responsibility but still outside control (one voice)
disturbed, almost angry

ninth grade:
still concerned about future
concern about next generation
very angry and frustrated at older generation
why? why?
asking what they can do
some power and responsibility to do something
more trust in knowledge: frustration that it's withheld
gender differences:
  girls: more connectedness
  boys: line of argument and who's to blame
random war -- a few crazy people
powerless, but sense of possible power
desire for autonomy
more specific about future

ADULT RESPONSES: WHAT CHILDREN NEED

third grade:
reassurance that it's o.k. to be feeling these things -- not alone
reassurance -- people working on it
create time and space to listen very carefully -- breaking the silence and isolation
how your family can help you, who else to rely on -- trustworthy adults
being in an alone situation -- what you can do
what's scary out there? (if mention of Russians, talk about enemy, humanness)
some discussion of hard information as it comes up, but with reassurance
taking care of environment

fifth grade:
individual attention
studying peacemakers
conflict resolution
protecting the environment
sensitivity to those who distrust adult reassurance
opportunities for artistic expression
imaging the future
modeling people making changes in classroom

seventh grade:
information about arms race, Soviets
a lot of reassurance
more restraint on elaborate discussion of effects of bomb
work with questioning authority
reassurance and empowerment through experiencing decision-making and critical thinking
thinking, reasoning skills
developing communication skills, listening skills
discussing gender differences in relation to war and peace
raising issue of justice, hearing different voices

ninth grade:
more solid information, historical, political, cultural
decision-making processes and clarifying issues
empowerment -- possible avenues of action
help them process anger about future being taken away (listening, talking, role-playing)
community activities to participate in
take kids to town meetings, other organizations, ask questions, try to put themselves in position of presenter
teach lobbying
field trips to U.N.
model in classroom taking responsibility, group process, cooperation, decision-making
cross-cultural awareness, understanding how we're formed by our culture (addresses issues of identity)

3. Discussing the sources of children's concerns:

The causes of children's concerns about nuclear weapons are complex. It is valuable to consider what other factors and conditions, besides the existence of the weapons themselves, contribute to children's fears. Most particularly, for this discussion, an important question is: how do the attitudes and actions of adults toward the nuclear threat affect children? This is not to deny the effects of knowledge about nuclear weapons on children, but to challenge people to consider what combination of conditions might contribute to children's concerns. A discussion of this issue could focus on these questions:

-- What are the motives of the children when they express their concerns? (It is important to consider what the children may not be saying)

-- What conditions have created the concerns expressed by the children?

-- If we do not want our children to see the world this way, what are our responsibilities as adults?

-- What effect does the political activity by parents (or lack of it) have on children?

Follow-up Activities:

A good place to begin might be to consider this quote from a ten-year-old in Allentown, PA: "The grown-ups should take over and do something about the war threats. Us kids are too young to worry about all this." The group can discuss:

-- What does the quote mean to you?

-- What can adults do?

Some activities of individuals and groups:

1. Showing the videotape to other groups of adults or on local cable television.

2. Listening to children in their own families and communities and talking with them about what they and other adults are doing about the nuclear threat.

3. Supporting the inclusion of nuclear education in school curricula by talking with PTA groups, school boards, or teachers.

4. Viewing the videotape, "A Place to Begin" (available through ESR) which outlines content and method for one nuclear education course, and discussing what is good nuclear education.

5. Supporting in-service workshops for teachers to see the tape and discuss the impact on their students or other workshops on nuclear age education (for assistance contact ESR).

6. Making a videotape, or if that is not possible, an audiotape of children in their own area. This is especially valuable in furthering research about what children are thinking, and will provide more local information for parents and teachers to understand the level of knowledge and concern of their children and students. For advice on procedures for making such tapes, see the interview with Roberta Snow and Dr. Eric Chivian in section I of this guide. For specific information about making a videotape, local cable television stations or Intersection Associates in Cambridge, MA are good resources.

7. Setting up support groups of parents or teachers for further discussion or study about children's concerns about nuclear weapons.

8. Working with school boards to pass a peace education resolution.

Example of this activity:

Milwaukee School Board Peace Education Resolution, approved April 19, 1983.

RESOLUTION ON ISSUES RELATED TO PEACE EDUCATION

IN THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Whereas there is a growing concern among educators regarding their responsibility towards students and the issue of nuclear weapons development and use;

And whereas education's primary function is to prepare students for the future;

And whereas there are strong indications that children are aware of the danger of these weapons and may be questioning what future exists for them;

And whereas the morale of students and their interest in school is directly affected by their perceptions of hope for the future;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Milwaukee Board of School Directors declare it appropriate to introduce into the school program, activities and curricula related to peace studies and the dilemma of the nuclear arms race.

USING "THERE'S A NUCLEAR WAR GOING ON INSIDE ME"

ADOLESCENT AUDIENCES

Reasons for showing the tape:

1. To allow older children to understand the feelings of younger children about the nuclear threat.

2. To spur discussion among older children about their own feelings about nuclear weapons.

Ideas for using the tape:

1. Before showing the tape young people can be asked:

   -- When did you first become aware of nuclear weapons?

   -- How did you respond?

These questions may be written first or simply shared. Often such discussions work well in pairs or small groups with some large group sharing following that.

2. Further discussion might include:

   -- How many people have younger brothers or sisters, or babysit for younger children? What age?

   -- What do you think they know and feel about nuclear weapons?

   -- Is there any age that children should become aware of nuclear weapons?

3. While watching the tape, students can write down comments that particularly strike them. This will facilitate further discussion about what they observed.

4. After viewing the tape, young people need time to express their reactions. Often the tape brings up older children's desire to protect the younger children, and anger that younger kids (and also they themselves) are afraid. This is an opportunity for adolescents to discuss their own thoughts and feelings. It is an important discussion which might work well in small groups followed by a large group sharing.

Follow-up Activities:

It is important to tell young people about the growing number of people all over the world who are working to avoid using nuclear weapons. They need the support of active adults if they have ideas they want to discuss or pursue.

1. Interviews with younger children:

Listening to younger children can be a rewarding experience for older children if they are interested in doing that. It is important that young people understand how to listen to younger children. It may be a temptation to answer questions, give information, or correct misinformation, but since we are still questioning at what age and in what forum children ought to be informed about nuclear weapons, caution in interviews is important. Students can read background information provided in the interview with Dr. Eric Chivian and Roberta Snow in section I of this guide for ideas about the interview process.

In interviewing children in elementary school classrooms, it is, of course, important to work with classroom teachers and parents. If adolescents interview younger siblings, they might first talk to their parents and enlist their support in the project. This might encourage the entire family to participate in the discussion.

2. Educating adults:

Young people often feel that adults should see this tape. There may be opportunities for them to organize and make presentations, which might include the tape, for PTA groups, community groups, and even local cable television stations. This is a way that young people can communicate their concern and open a dialogue with adults in their communities about ways that adults and young people might work together to address the nuclear threat.

3. Raising the issue in schools:

Students may want other young people to learn with them about the arms race and related issues. They might form study groups or approach teachers and curriculum planners about including nuclear education in the school.

4. Writing letters:

Another way for young people to express their reactions to the tape publicly is to write an article or letter for the local paper. Enabling young people to speak out includes the posssibility that they might support a range of views. It is important to support and encourage all expressions of young people's concerns, regardless of their perspective.

USING "WHAT SOVIET CHILDREN ARE SAYING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

ADULT AUDIENCES

Reasons for showing the tape:

1. To become informed about what some Soviet children think and feel about nuclear weapons and some of the sources of their information.

2. To examine attitudes and ideas about the Soviet Union.

3. To identify and think about our sources of information about the Soviet Union.

4. To discuss the value of personal contact, including exchanges between citizens of the Soviet Union and the United States.

5. To explore similarities and differences.

6. To spur interest in pursuing further information on Soviet life and the arms race.

7. To raise questions about the sources of differences and roots of conflict.

Ideas for Using the tape:

1. Existing images of the Soviets:

Since adult audiences, like adolescent audiences, usually have strong pictures of Soviet citizens and the way they live, it is usually valuable to spend some time discussing these. The group could:

a. brainstorm images that come to mind when they think of the Soviets. (Some people have found that this can reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them. The next suggestions address that concern.)

b. go back over the list and circle the ones people know to be absolutely true.

c. consider what sources of information we have about Soviet people and what the limitations of these sources are. (This might be an opportunity to point out the need for first-hand information.)

d. speculate what messages they expect Soviet young people to have for American young people.

The ideas generated in these brainstorms and discussions can be put on blackboards or large pieces of paper for reference in the discussion following the tape.

2. Using the interview with Dr. Chivian:

The interview from section III of this guide can be used before or after viewing the tape. If it is used before viewing, many questions about methods of selecting children for the interviews, as well as procedures for receiving Soviet support in doing the project, will be answered. However, if time is limited, participants could be given the interview as a hand-out to take away with them, or the facilitators could use it to answer questions following the viewing of the tape.

3. Reacting to the tape:

After viewing the tape, discussion might begin by simply having people express their reactions. Focusing questions could include:

-- Were there any comments that surprised you?

-- How do the appearance and responses of the children compare with what you expected?

-- How do the responses compare with those you would expect from American young people you know?

-- Has anything changed about the way you view Soviet children?

-- What are the implications for education? (Should American children be given specific nuclear education in schools?)

-- What would you like to know now about the Soviet Union or these children?

4. The value of exchange projects:

Beyond the discussion of the tape itself, people might consider whether it is important for the citizens of the United States and the Soviet Union to know more about each other. If so, how can that happen?

Follow-up activities:

1. Finding other audiences in the community, both adult and adolescent, who might be interested in seeing the tape.

2. Providing opportunities for the school system to use the tape in classrooms.

3. Finding ways to create dialogue and exchanges with people in the Soviet Union. Good resources for this are:

US-USSR Youth Exchange Program
3103 Washington Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Institute for Soviet American Relations
2738 McKinley Street, NW
Washington, DC 20015

Ground Zero Pairing Project
Professor Earl Molander
P.O. Box 19049
Portland, OR 97219

Organizations Involved in Soviet-American Relations: A Handbook
The Forum Institute
Washington, D.C.

4. Starting a study group on Soviet life and culture in the community, or studying Soviet life and culture as a family.

USING "WHAT SOVIET CHILDREN ARE SAYING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

ADOLESCENT AUDIENCES

Reasons for showing the tape:

1. To become informed about what some Soviet children are thinking. and feeling about nuclear weapons and some of the sources of information available to them.

2. To examine attitudes and ideas about the Soviet Union.

3. To identify and think about our sources of information about the Soviet Union.

4. To explore similarities and differences between their feelings and thoughts about nuclear weapons and those of the children on the tape.

5. To explore any human and cultural similarities and differences.

6. To spur interest in pursuing further information on Soviet life or the arms race.

7. To discuss the value of personal contact, including exchanges between citizens of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Ideas for using the tape:

Most teachers have found that many students are quite ignorant about the USSR and its people. Yet they often have strong feelings based on little information. In classes in which students have not had exposure to information about the Soviet Union, a previewing discussion in which the students' attitudes and feelings are aired is useful. The format can be similar to that used with adult audiences (see p. 57 of this guide).

1. Using questions from the tape:

Before viewing the tape, students may be asked the same questions the Soviet children were asked. Their answers might be taped and shown later for comparison with responses of Soviet children. Students might also simply write out their own answers privately.

2. Other pre-viewing questions:

-- What do you know about the Soviet Union?

-- How do you feel about the Soviet Union?

-- What do you wish you knew about the Soviet Union?

Frequently in answering these questions, students recognize that their opinions are based on little information.

3. Predicting messages from Soviet children:

Students can predict the messages from Soviet children and compare the expected responses with the actual ones. The tape can be stopped just before the messages begin and students asked to write the messages they expect. In some classes where this was done, students were surprised to find the messages so friendly. This can be an opportunity to discuss the sources of their expectation that the messages would be hostile.

4. Questions for post-viewing discussion:

It may be valuable for students to write individual answers first.

-- What was your reaction to the tape?

-- How are Soviet children's concerns about nuclear weapons like yours?

-- How are they different from yours?

-- What did you learn from the tape?

-- Did anything surprise you?

-- What questions did the tape raise in your mind?

-- What message do the producers of the tape want to give?

-- Who would you like to see this tape?

Example of this activity:

Student answers to questions before and after viewing the tape. 11th grade, Arlington (MA) High School, June, 1984.

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR "WHAT SOVIET CHILDREN ARE SAYING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

Before viewing the tape:

Q: What is your attitude toward the USSR?

-- I think they are power-hungry and they should leave everyone alone or just be friends with everyone.

-- I think they can't be trusted and they might not keep their word on anything.

-- There isn't much difference (besides language, culture, ideology and geographical location) between us and them.

-- Personally I would not want to live there.

-- I think the Russians are kind of cruel and heartless. It's probably just the stereotype of them that a lot of people have. Like all Russians wear dark colors and all the days in Russia are cold and gloomy.

-- I think Soviet people are the same as us but they just choose to live in a different type of society. I don't like the Soviet government because they are too stubborn and never compromise about anything, but neither does the U.S.

Q: Where did you get your information about the Soviet Union?

T.V. news
Hearing people say things
History books
News magazines
Teachers
Parents
Newspapers

Q: What would you like to know about the Soviet Union?

-- Exactly how the people are treated, how the government is run, and what it looks like.

-- What the problems are between America and the USSR.

-- I wish I knew if they were ever going to plan an attack on the U.S.

-- I wish I knew what a typical day for a teenager and even a grown-up would be like living in Russia. I wish I knew what their attitude toward the U.S. was and what they do for fun. I wish I knew what kinds of schools they have and what kinds of T.V. shows they watch. I wonder if they feel we are a threat to them.

-- I would like to know how people feel about living there and do they know how different it is living in a democratic society?

After viewing the tape:

Q: How are the concerns about nuclear weapons like yours?

-- They don't want war either and they're just as afraid of nuclear weapons as we are.

-- The concerns of Soviet children about nuclear weapons are like mine because they seem frightened by the thought of a nuclear war happening and they know that many people like family members and friends will be killed in the war and many people would not survive a nuclear war or they would be very sick. They seemed to have all of the same concerns about nuclear war that I do.

-- We both seemed to be concerned about how the world would be after. And how people would live or die. And most of all, how we can stop this war, if we can.

-- I feel scared just as they are when the topic comes up. I hate to think about everything being destroyed and everyone dying. I'd rather just not think about it because it's a scary subject.

Q: How are their concerns different from yours?

-- They seemed more informed than us even at a younger age.

-- Soviet kids seem to be more grown up and serious when they are spoken to.

-- They think about it every day; I don't. And they really worry about it; I don't.

-- I really don't care if we all blow up because I want to die in the blast. I just got fed up with being nervous so I don't care.

-- They seem to think a war won't happen, and if it does it won't be in their lifetimes. I figure a war will either happen in the next few years or never.

Q: What was your reaction to the tape?

-- I thought Soviet kids would be a lot more military-like.

-- It made you feel kind of relieved to know that they want peace too.

-- I was shocked to hear that they felt the same way we do and shocked that the government let them tape it too.

-- It was good to know they felt concerned because in years to come maybe the younger generations that are so concerned can find a better way to control war.

-- They probably could not say exactly what they wanted to.

Q: Who should see this tape?

-- Everyone, because everyone I'm sure has a different view of the Soviet Union kids.

-- More government officials of both countries.

-- I think adults should see this tape, people who hold authority, so they can see the children's views.

-- Everyone, old and young, so they can see what we want this world to be like.

-- Kids of all countries, to answer some of their questions.

-- Everyone in the U.S. because we don't have good feelings about them. We think they are monsters or something.

5. Putting Americans on tape:

In the discussion following the tape, it might be valuable to talk about the importance of seeing individual children speaking and of keeping in mind that these children speak for themselves and not all Soviet children. Students can also consider how they would want American young people to appear on the tape. Some suggestions for questions:

-- Who would you choose to be on a tape that would go to the Soviet Union?

-- Would you like to be on such a tape?

-- What impression of American young people would you try to give?

-- What impression would you like Soviet young people to have?

-- How would you convey to Soviet young people the "truths" about American young people? Would you include "positive" and "negative" aspects?

-- How might such "truths" be determined?

-- What television shows or movies would you show to Soviet young people to teach them about life in America? Are there some you would prefer they did not see?

This activity can lead to a valuable discussion about American culture and students' attitudes toward various aspects of it.

Follow-up activities:

1. Making a videotape of American students:

One activity that is popular after viewing the tape of the Soviet children is making a videotape in response. However, one caution is important: It is not a good idea to try to send videotapes to the Soviet Union. Because video equipment is not so readily available in the Soviet Union, and because our tapes are not compatible with their equipment, it is difficult for people from the United States to send tapes to the Soviet Union and have them shown. Young people should be made aware of this. Making a tape is still a valuable activity, but it will be more valuable in informing other Americans about young people's feelings than in being seen in the Soviet Union.

Three examples of this activity:

The Watertown-Belmont tapes, March-August, 1984

contacts: Elizabeth Campbell Elliott
45 Oliver Street
Watertown, MA 02172
(617) 926-0878

Stephen Hunt
100 Creeley Road
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 484-3989

Lally Stowell
Watertown High School
Watertown, MA 02172

The Boston English tape, spring, 1984

contacts: Roberta Snow
Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1764

Susan Ornsberg
Boston English High School
77 Avenue Louis Pasteur
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 738-4771

"Hello Friend", the Lansing, MI videotape

contact: Dr. Richard Sandler
50 South Holmes Street
Lansing, MI 48912
(517) 484-1209

The Watertown-Belmont experience:
"Students Speak Out on Nuclear War"

This videotape project began in March, 1984 when five community organizations in Watertown and Belmont organized a forum entitled "Nuclear Issues and Our Families" which was to explore the impact of the threat of nuclear war on the daily lives of the young people in the two communities. Teachers from junior and senior high schools developed a plan to create a videotape in which students would express their feelings. Approximately 40 students participated in the project, with a small group of students taking responsibility for organizing the project. When the project began, many students expressed feelings of powerlessness and futility. "I think often you feel futile -- what is talking among yourselves really going to do to prevent nuclear war? I don't know what we can do as kids."

As they worked on the tape they began to feel differently. "This videotape we are making is one way kids can have an impact." Many students joined the project after seeing the tape "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons."

When the tape was completed, it was shown to high school classes, to community groups, and to 175 Watertown and Belmont residents at the Nuclear Issues and Our Families forum. Dr. Chivian took the tape with him to the Soviet Union in May.

But that was not the end of it. On August 6th (Hiroshima Day) 22 students from Watertown and Belmont affiliated with the videotape project, and several community members took the tape to Washington, D.C. to show to Congressional legislators and aides. During the day they met with aides of Senators Kennedy and Tsongas as well as those of Congressmen O'Neill, Shannon, Mavroules and Markey, who listened to the students and encouraged them to continue to speak out.

Of the experience in Washington, one student said, "It's good to realize that when I have something to say, I will be listened to. I think the day in Washington made me realize we really do have a say in what our representatives do. The people who saw our tape were impressed." Another said, "The whole day has made a tangible experience out of feelings I have been having. It was more than just talk; it was getting something done. Some important people found out how a lot of people feel, and we found out they share our feelings."

The Boston English High School experience:

Two valuable videotapes came out of a week-long mini-course about nuclear weapons at the Fenway School in Boston English High School. The following is an explanation of the activities.

The week began with a classroom discussion, led by their classroom teacher, about how they felt about the existence of nuclear weapons and national defense. The class was tight and unresponsive and students said that they did not want to talk about this topic. Responding to their spoken needs, we reassured them that they did not have to use this week to talk about these issues, but first they might be interested in sharing with us why they were uninterested. Their comments centered around three themes: I don't think about nuclear weapons because there is nothing you can do about them; even if I talked about how I feel nobody would listen; the Russians pose such an enormous threat it would be dangerous to get rid of the weapons. They seemed fairly resigned to this and reported that "It's our strength and pride on the line so of course people wouldn't want food instead of bombs." So why talk about it?

Since the original plan was to have them be in a videotape practicing their discussion skills (fulfilling a school agenda) the teacher asked if they would like to make a tape about how they were thinking about the situation. Although there was lukewarm enthusiasm, most of the students had never seen themselves on T.V. and were interested in trying it.

The second day we brought in Intersection Video Crew to film them. This time the discussion was dominated by great concern about the Soviet Union and possibility of a Soviet takeover. A rather lively conversation took place about how there was no freedom in Russia and nobody listens to people there. We reminded them that the day before they had said similar things about our own country. They squirmed a bit and said that in Russia even kids couldn't talk about what they wanted. They thought if kids talked about not wanting war they might be put in jail.

The third day we showed them the Soviet tape of your interviews. There was massive discomfort during the tape as students muttered through it, "Who's the translator? Are these kids really Russian? Does their government know about this?" We reminded them that the day before they told us that their government knew everything that went on.

We turned off the tape at the point when the interviewer asks if the Soviet children have any messages for American children and asked the class to guess what they might say. They thought that it would be very anti-American and they would ask us to stop making bombs. We played the end of the tape and students were quite surprised. "They wished us good things. They didn't even really say anything bad about our government. Their tape is so different than ours. It's a good think they didn't see ours; they'd think we were anti-Soviet." "Aren't you?" we questioned.

A brilliant idea emerged and a student suggested that the class should make a video tape to send back to the Soviet children about how American students feel about them. "Could we get the tape to them?" they asked us. We told them we could try.

The next day Intersection returned and set up equipment in the classroom. Students spoke into the microphone, speaking passionately sending messages to Soviet youth. Comments included:

"I'd like to say 'hello' and I admire some of the Russian kids who really think of making peace because no one in the United States would ever think that Russians would like to make peace with the United States and I just wish some of the people in the United States would give them a chance."

"Kids are kids -- no matter what country you come from, they are kids...Kids should speak out whatever they believe in because without kids of the world today what would the world be? I'd just tell the Russian kids, 'Don't give up! Try your hardest. Don't never give up. Just fight to the end.'"

"I'm glad to know that they're concerned about nuclear war and the possibilities of it. I just didn't know that they were as aware as we were about it. So I'm very glad that they're interested in it."

After each student spoke the class spontaneously applauded so the room was filled with a sense of great purposefulness and accomplishment.

Besides the videotape produced by the students, there is also a tape made by Roberta Snow showing the students talking about their attitudes toward nuclear weapons and the Soviets before viewing the Soviet tape, a section of "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons," and a section of the students' responses to the Soviet tape. This documentation of the process is valuable for demonstrating how students were changed by the experience.

The Lansing, MI experience:

"Hello Friend" is a 22-minute broadcast-quality video penpal idea, using 50 eighth-graders from Lansing, MI who shared their lives and what they do for fun, including break-dancing. Then they stated their questions and concerns about nuclear weapons, and sent messages and questions to Soviet children.

Dr. Sandler discovered the problem of having the tape shown in the Soviet Union and expresses the hope that, while such exchanges are difficult now, they will become more readily possible in the future.

Following the making of the tape, Dr. Sandler conducted a study with 320 students in the Lansing school system, including the 50 children who participated in making the videotape, to see if there was a difference in their responses. About their fears and concerns about nuclear war, the responses among the students were similar. However, the 50 students who participated in the videotape had more interest in the Soviet Union and in communicating with Soviet young people. According to Dr. Sandler, those 50 students made a leap toward thinking of the Soviets as people, instead of "the enemy". So the experience of making the videotape was empowering and enlightening.

2. Showing the tape to other groups:

Since students often feel that "everyone" should see this tape, one useful activity is brainstorming ways to have others see it. Frequently students are members of extra-curricular groups or community groups, or have access to groups to which their parents belong, where the tape might be shown. In addition, they might arrange for other classes in the school to see the tape or for it to be shown on a local cable television station.

3. Learning about the Soviets:

If students feel it is important for them to learn more about the Soviet Union and Soviet life, they might encourage Social Studies departments, principals, and school committees to include Soviet studies in the curriculum. More immediately, they could ask to learn more about the Soviet Union in their current classes or begin a Soviet study group on their own. If students show such an interest, they might study some aspect of the Soviet Union as part of a research project in a Social Studies or English class. This is especially valuable since students often say they cannot find topics of interest to them for research. Topics on the Soviet Union also offer an especially good opportunity to talk about availability and bias of sources.

4. US-USSR Exchanges:

One overwhelming desire of students seems to be to make some kind of contact with Soviet young people. One way to do this is by joining a pen pal organization. One resource for pen pals is:

Stephan Scott
International Friendship League
22 Batterymarch Street
Boston, MA 02190
(617) 523-4223

Example of this activity:

Communications Project: a video exchange between schools in Moscow and Cambridge, MA begun in September, 1984.

contact: Roberta Snow
Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1764

A project has been started matching a ninth grade class at Cambridge (MA) Rindge and Latin School with a ninth grade class in School 299 in Moscow. Students will send unedited tapes back and forth for a period of a year to develop a relationship and share in each others' lives.

5. Additional Resources:

Available from: US-USSR Youth Exchange Program
3103 Washington Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 346-4234

"Styles in Soviet Education," an 18-minute videotape of children from three parts of the Soviet Union engaged in a variety of activities.

Step One: Getting to Know the Soviet Union and Its People, a packet of teaching materials available Spring, 1985.

USING THE TWO VIDEOTAPES TOGETHER

Reasons for showing the tapes:

In addition to the goals mentioned in discussion of the two tapes separately, the most valuable use of the tapes together is for comparison of the behavior and attitudes of the children. However, it is important to remember that judgements or conclusions cannot be made about all American children or all Soviet children from such small samples. Again, the value of the tapes is not in drawing general conclusions but in listening to the voices of some individual children and opening dialogues within communities and between generations about nuclear weapons and our responses to them.

Ideas for using the tapes:

With audiences of either adolescents or adults, it is important to remember that the group will tend to begin comparing almost automatically as soon as the second tape is shown. For this reason, it may be valuable to consider the primary goal in choosing which tape to view first, since that tape will probably receive more attention as a separate entity. For example, if the primary goal is discussion of developmental concerns of young people, it might be best to show "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me," to follow the method suggested for brainstorming lists and for discussion, and then to show the Soviet tape which could be compared for developmental concerns. Or, if the primary goal is to acquaint an audience with Soviet children and what some of them think and say about nuclear weapons, "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons" could be shown first, including relevant pre- and post-viewing questions and discussion, followed by the American children for comparison of attitudes and feelings.

Some possible questions for discussion:

1. In what ways do children on the two tapes express the same concerns?

2. Do you see some differences?

3. Do Soviet children and American children of the same ages show similar developmental concerns?

4. In what ways are the children similar/different:
   a. in their manner of expression?
   b. in their knowledge of nuclear weapons?
   c. in their sources of information?
   d. in their hopefulness about avoiding a nuclear war?

Follow-up activities:

Depending on the interest of the group, any of the next steps from the previous sections would be appropriate.

CONTACTS:

Listed here are the names of four people who have used these videotapes extensively. They have agreed to share their experiences with others who are planning to use the tape.

Leslie Rennie
3205 NE 49th Avenue
Portland, OR 97213
(503) 282-8036

is the Co-Chair of Portland ESR. She has used both videotapes with a variety of adult audiences including teachers, parents and interested community people. She says, "The tapes generate a lot of discussion and they both really dispel some stereotypes. People are interested in seeing the Soviet children on tape, and they frequently assume American kids don't know anything about nuclear weapons so they're surprised. What's been most striking is the contrast in people's minds between the Soviet kids who feel comfort because they feel that their government is doing something and they're protected and the American kids who feel less secure. This has made people want to empower kids to feel able to take the individual responsibility that is part of a democratic government."

Dr. Martin Schotz
79 Carlton Street
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-2762

is a member of the Speakers Bureau of Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Parish Education for Peace Project, Peace and Justice Commission, Greater Boston Catholic Archdiocese, and has used the tapes with adult audiences including groups of teachers, church groups, and hospital groups. About "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons," Dr. Schotz says, "Some visiting Soviet physicists said it was the most objective presentation of Soviet opinion they had seen in the entire United States, and they were here for six months." About "There's a Nuclear War Going On Inside Me," he said, "The children speak directly about the problem grasping the essence of it without the numbing rationalizations of adults."

Elise Turner
Project Crossroads
3878 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 983-6859

has used "What Soviet Children Are Saying About Nuclear Weapons" extensively over the past two years in grades 7-12 in Santa Fe and Pecos, a small town near Santa Fe. She says, "Students have almost never seen a real Soviet person. They think of them as automatons with thoughts shoved into their brains. So when they see these Soviet students and their sensitive responses, their stereotypes get called into question. It's like a flashlight in the dark of the unknown. Also, some students are tired of being asked how they feel about nuclear weapons, but when they see Soviet kids talking about it, it's a new avenue to discussing the threat."

Steve Weimar
Chapter Co-ordinator
Philadelphia ESR
3401 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19101
(215) 898-7736

has used both tapes with public high school students and teachers from a variety of schools. He says, "I mainly think it's a great way to raise issues without having the intrusion of the personality of a speaker. It allows the workshop facilitator to lead the discussion and the tapes to raise the issues."

EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY is a national, non-profit membership organization of educators, parents, and concerned individuals who believe that the nuclear age demands new approaches to education. ESR is committed to presenting divergent views in the classroom on nuclear issues, war, and peace; to dealing with young people's questions and fears about the threat of nuclear war; and to fostering citizen participation in decision making about the nuclear arms race. ESR researches students' attitudes toward nuclear issues, assesses educational materials, develops curricula, sponsors conferences and professional development programs, and provides speakers and consultation services.

EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 492-1764